

Western Balkan companies moving forward on road to the EU

While Member States delayed important decisions on EU enlargement at last week's European Council, a recent EUROCHAMBRES analysis highlights that businesses in the Western Balkans* are moving forward on their way to the EU.

Out of 500 audited companies, 80% comply with EU legislation, particularly in Croatia, the only acceding country in the region, and in Serbia, a new candidate country. Only one fifth of companies face major difficulties mainly related to lack of information. The report analysed the compliance with EU legislation in various areas such as health and safety at work and environment. In the field of energy efficiency there is room for improvement, with just one fourth of companies managing to keep their spending on energy under 3% of their income. The lack of financial means or human resources are identified as the main reasons for the low uptake of energy efficiency measures.

Commenting on the results, Arnaldo Abruzzini, Secretary General at EUROCHAMBRES, said: *"Businesses realise that fulfilling the acquis requirements is not just an additional responsibility but also strengthens their competitiveness in the EU and the global markets. Thus, it is important to communicate on the benefits of the EU enlargement process. Well informed companies will put all their weight behind the necessary reforms, which remain the main engine of the accession process, and thus contribute to making the European project of the Western Balkans a success story."*

The analysis was conducted in the framework of the PACE project (Partners for Acquis Compliance and Energy Efficiency), a two year project co-financed by the EU and implemented by EUROCHAMBRES in cooperation with the six National Chambers in the Western Balkans. The PACE Project offered concrete tools to increase the level of awareness of companies in the region on relevant EU legislation as well as on energy efficiency.

*Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro and Serbia.

["Fit for the EU?" brochure](#) ; ["Energetic Balkans" brochure](#) ; [PACE website](#)

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